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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 11, 2010

Summary: Coverage of the visiting Congressional delegation led by Senator John McCain with senior Pakistani officials was front page news in all major weekend editions. Major English dailies highlighted Senator McCain's vow to "continue drone attacks" amidst reports of yet another drone strike in North Waziristan. Reaction to new U.S. airport screening regulations continued to receive extensive coverage. Newspapers reported Senator Lieberman's skepticism at the usefulness of the new security measures. Nearly all major dailies front-paged Prime Minister Gilani's statement that the new measures could negatively impact bilateral ties. Several papers reported that police registered a case against two U.S. Consulate Karachi employees currently held in a Gwadar jail on accusations of using false vehicle license plates. "Dawn," front-paged a story quoting an unnamed official as claiming that the U.S. has vacated all airbases in Pakistan except the Shamsi airbase in Baluchistan. U.S. Special Representative Holbrooke's remarks that the "U.S. can help stabilize the current political situation in Pakistan" also received prominent display. On Sunday, "The Nation" front-paged a report that Americans have intensified their "PR campaign" as a confidence building measure. The daily reported that "senior [Pakistani] government officials have been tasked to act as 'negotiators' between the U.S. and 'anti-American sections' of the press." On Monday morning, U.S. CENTCOM Commander, General Petraeus' remarks that "Iran's nuclear facilities can be bombed" dominated headlines in several major newspapers. Nearly all major dailies highlighted Senator Lieberman and Senator McCain's comments to CNN that Pakistan may take action in North Waziristan in the near future. Media also covered Senator Feinstein's statement claiming that "many Guantanamo inmates are "back on battlefield." Several dailies reported Pakistani nuclear scientist Dr. AQ Khan's offer to help "overcome energy crisis" during an address to a gathering of lawyers in Rawalpindi. End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: U.S. Senators Defend Drone Attacks - "Dawn" (01/09)

"Senior U.S. lawmakers defended on Friday the use of drones to attack terrorist targets inside Pakistan and indicated that there would be no let-up in the strikes but efforts would be made to reduce collateral damage. 'We have to do everything we can, that we feel is necessary to protect Americans from the attacks of terrorists who may be based here and operate out of Pakistan, Senator John McCain, who is leading a bipartisan delegation of U.S. senators visiting Pakistan, said at a news conference."

News Story: Gilani Assails New U.S. Security Checks For - "Dawn" (01/09)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani expressed serious reservations on Friday over U.S. government's new measures for screening Pakistani travelers and termed the move discriminatory... Senator Joseph Lieberman agreed with the Prime Minister about the negative fallout of the new airport security checks and said he himself was skeptical about the usefulness of the measures."

News Story: Pak Interests Should Be Protected: Kayani - "The Nation" (01/09)

"Pakistani military leadership has emphasized that protection of Pakistan's interest in the new U.S. Afghan policy should be ensured and the U.S. should realize that the drone attacks in Pakistan are creating a negative impact, according to ISPR."

News Story: U.S. To Back Afghan Reconciliation With Taliban: Holbrooke - "Dawn" (01/09)

"The United States intends to increase its focus on promoting reconciliation between the Afghan government and relatively moderate Taliban elements, says Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. In a speech at Washington's Brookings Institution on Thursday, Mr. Holbrooke said that his office viewed the process of reconciliation between the Afghan government and the Taliban as 'high on our personal priority list.'"

News Story: U.S. Can Help Stabilize Political Situation: Holbrooke - "Dawn" (01/09)

"The United States can help stabilize the current political situation in Pakistan if it is asked by all parties to do so, U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke said on Friday. Mr. Holbrooke, who is scheduled to visit Pakistan next week, held a special briefing for Pakistani journalists at the State Department where he spoke on the country's unsettling political situation and its possible impact on the war against terrorists."

News Story: Case Registered Against Held U.S. Consulate Employees - "Dawn" (01/09)

"Police have refused to release employees of the U.S. Consulate in Karachi till completion of investigation and determining the motive of their visit to Turbat and Gwadar. The consulate's deputy security officer Ghulam Gilani, driver Muzaffar Ali Shah and their guard were arrested on Wednesday night when they were travelling in a vehicle with a fake number plate. 'The three employees are still in police custody for interrogation,' a senior official of the provincial government told 'Dawn' on Friday."

News Story: U.S. Policies Can Hurt Bilateral Ties: Gilani - "Daily Times" (01/10)

"Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani on Friday described as 'discriminatory' new security measures introduced by the U.S. government to screen Pakistani nationals in America, and said persistence with such policies - which lead to 'consternation and anxiety among Pakistanis' - could affect the bilateral ties."

News Story: Americans Intensify their 'PR' Campaign - "The Nation" (01/10)

"Americans are out for a mega 'PR campaign' as part of their 'confidence building measures' in the region under the growing demand of international community to trial notorious Blackwater for gross human rights violations in Iraq and Afghanistan."

News Story: Holbrooke To Discuss Indian Threat In Islamabad - "Dawn" (01/10)

"U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke has said that he would like to hear directly from Pakistani leaders how they viewed a threatening statement from the Indian military chief when he visits Islamabad next week. Briefing Pakistani journalists on Friday, Mr. Holbrooke said he too had read reports about this issue, but he would not like to base his comments on media reports alone."

News Story: Action Likely In N. Waziristan, Say U.S. Senators -

"Dawn" (01/11)

"There's a possibility that Pakistan may take some action in North Waziristan in the near future, two U.S. Senators who visited Islamabad last week told a television channel on Sunday. Senator Joe Lieberman, chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security, and Senator John McCain, a former Republican presidential candidate, also said that they left Islamabad convinced that Pakistan was fully committed to the war against terrorists."

News Story: U.S. Will Try To Convert Taliban Militants: Holbrooke - "Pakistan Observer" (01/11)

"The United States is planning to focus more on promoting reconciliation between the Afghan government and relatively moderate Taliban elements, Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, said."

#### TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: All But Shamsi Airbase Vacated By U.S.: Official - "Dawn" (01/09)

"The United States has vacated all airbases in Pakistan - except the one in Balochistan - which its forces had been using since the beginning of the war in Afghanistan. 'The Shamsi airbase in Balochistan is still being used by U.S. forces,' an official told 'Dawn' on Friday."

News Story: Body to Challenge Detained Americans Deportation - "The Frontier Post" (01/09)

"Chairman of Senate Standing Committee on Interior Senator Talha Mehmood, on Friday vowed to submit a privilege motion in the House if the Ministry of Interior despite instructions from Senate Standing Committee tried to repatriate American nationals alleging that Ministry of Interior has completed all arrangements for their deportation. Senator Talha Mehmood while addressing a news conference said U.S. citizens were freely moving across the country using private vehicles violating diplomatic codes adding that he had asked the government to provide him with facts and figures regarding U.S. citizens, their properties and vehicles.... Criticizing the new U.S. visa restrictions and strict screening of Pakistanis he urged the government for strict screening of U.S. citizens visiting Pakistan. Hundreds of U.S. and NATO containers, used the Pakistani soil daily for transportation to Afghanistan resulting in immense loss of civilian lives as well as property in wake of terrorism and still Pakistan was playing a frontline state in the war against terrorism while on the other hand U.S. has imposed strict screening for the citizens of its allied state which was unjust."

News Story: Drone Strike Kills Four In North Waziristan - "Dawn" (01/09)

"A U.S. missile strike on Saturday killed at least four militants in Pakistan's lawless tribal belt, Pakistani security and intelligence officials said."

News Story: Malik Says Killings Aimed At Destabilizing Coalition - "Dawn" (01/09)

"Federal Interior Minister Rehman Malik on Friday declared that the current spate of killings in the city was the handiwork of those who wanted to undermine the PPP-MQM coalition in Sindh and also wished to destabilize Pakistan. He said no political party was involved in the target killings. The minister asked illegal immigrants to get their names registered with authorities or leave the country within 30 days, adding that strict action would be taken against all immigrants who did not obey the order."

News Story: Fazlullah Will Not Surrender Until Sharia Implemented - "Dawn" (01/09)

"The mother of militant leader Fazlullah said on Saturday that her son will not surrender until Sharia is implemented. Fazlullah's mother and teacher were presented before the media in Swat."

News Story: Airline Plot 'Buck Stops With Me': Obama - "Dawn"

(01/09)

"President Barack Obama declared on Thursday 'the buck stops with me' over major intelligence flaws exposed by an Al Qaeda attack on a U.S. passenger jet and ordered a sweeping homeland security overhaul. Releasing two reports on the thwarted Christmas Day bombing, Mr. Obama said spy agencies did not properly "connect and understand" disparate data that could have busted the plot as it was planned by an Al Qaeda affiliate in Yemen."

News Story: Rebuilding Trust To Take Time: Mullen - "The Nation" (01/10)

"The U.S. had developed significant trust deficit with Pakistan over the period between 1990 and 2002 because of the sanctions placed on that country and achievement of results on bilateral relationship front would take some time, a top U.S. military official has said. 'We are just starting to rebuild that trust, quite frankly. And it's going to take a while,' Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at the Naval War College in Rhode Island."

News Story: OIC must take up screening issue with U.S.: Mushahid - "The News" (01/10)

"Secretary General Pakistan Muslim League -Q Saturday demanded of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) to send its delegation to convey to U.S. President Barack Obama to take up the issue of Washington new immigration policy of screening of nationals of Islamic Countries. 'The OIC should take this matter seriously as it is insulting and not acceptable as it would start new wave of cold war between the West and Islamic world,' he said in an interview with 'The News' and 'Jang' in Islamabad on Saturday."

News Story: Pak-Afghan Border Most Important War Locale - "Dawn" (01/10)

"U.S. head of Central Command, General David Petraeus dispelled reports of a possible ground assault in Yemen saying that American forces and resources will remain focused on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border as it battles Al-Qaeda. Petraeus believes Al-Qaeda is under pressure in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan and the organisation is now seeking refuge in Yemen."

News Story: Over 12,800 Militants Caught In 2009' - "Dawn" (01/11)

"Over 12,800 suspected militants, 75 of them belonging to Al Qaeda and 9,739 local Taliban or members of other banned groups, were arrested during operations conducted by law-enforcement agencies and armed forces across the country in 2009, says a report issued in Islamabad on Sunday."

#### POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: World Support Must For Peaceful Pakistan: Qureshi - "Daily Times" (01/10)

"The international community should continue supporting Pakistan's efforts to build itself into a peaceful, modern state, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said on Friday. Briefing the heads and representatives of missions from European countries, Canada and the U.S., Qureshi said the government was committed to making Pakistan a peaceful country and required developed countries' continuous support for the purpose."

#### ECONOMY/ENVIRONMENT

News Story: Delay In Aid Could Lead To Setback In War Against Terrorism: Zardari - "Daily Times" (01/10)

"Delay in the dispensation of pledges made by the international community could force Pakistan to cut development spending and the provision of critical social services, which in turn could be a 'setback for the war on terror,' President Asif Ali Zardari has said. 'Given the severity of the internal security challenge - it is critical that the economy is provided a strong stimulus as quickly as possible,' Zardari emphasizes in an article in the Foreign Affairs magazine."

News Story: Dr. A.Q. Khan Offers Help To Overcome Energy Crisis -  
The Nation" (01/10)

"Renowned nuclear scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan has said that now judges would not give any wrong verdict against the interests of country and nation since they realize that people stand behind them in right decision. Dr. Khan expressed these views in his first public appearance after restrictions were imposed on his movement in 2004, at District Courts Rawalpindi.... Expressing his concerns over the current situation of the country, he also expressed his grief over the ongoing energy crisis and said that he was ready to help the government in overcoming the electricity problem but the issue was that nobody was ready to listen to him."

News Story: IMF Recipe to Overcome Pak Economic Woes - "The News"  
(01/11)

"The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has underlined the need for putting in place a credible fiscal consolidation, strengthened competitiveness and 'improved governance' as indispensable ingredients for reducing the vulnerabilities being faced by Pakistan's economy, IMF point out." (Story not available online)

News Story: USAID To Finance Govt. For Livestock Uplift - "The  
Nation" (01/11)

"Secretary Livestock Laiq Ahmed Memon informed the meeting that USAID has showed keen interest in collaborating with the Sindh government for extending support to dairy and meat sector in Sindh, while a scheme for raising productivity and income of the farmers at the cost of Rs500 million will be started very soon. He said that USAID was launching the Empower Pakistan Livestock Development Project (EPLDP) with \$75 million investment under empower Pakistan agriculture program (EPAG) which aimed to gear up a broad based effort to promote economic growth in order to alleviate poverty in rural areas of Pakistan."

#### MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: CDA Yet to Get Damages From U.S. Embassy - "The Nation"  
(01/10)

"Slackness on the part of the officials of Law Directorate of the CDA has delayed the procedure to get compensation amount of approximately Rs 22 million from U.S. Embassy against CDA's damaged vehicle. It is pertinent to note here that on October 265 last year, a U.S. diplomat, allegedly drunk and ignoring red traffic signal, had rammed his Prado jeep (LG-1) into the CDA fire-brigade vehicle near Radio Pakistan Chowk, causing approximately Rs 25 million loss to CDA." (Link not available)

News Story: U.S. Has Contingency Plan For Iran Nukes: Petraeus -  
"Dawn" (01/11)

"The United States has developed contingency plans to address Iran's nuclear ambitions if negotiations falter between the Islamic republic and Western nations, a top U.S. General said on Sunday. 'It would be almost literally irresponsible if CENTCOM were not to have been thinking about the various 'what ifs' and to make plans for a whole variety of different contingencies,' said General David Petraeus, who heads the U.S. Central Command that oversees the Middle East, the Gulf region and Central Asia, AFP reports."

#### EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Editorial: U.S. Mixed Signals, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/09)

"While the Clinton remarks should be welcomed, overall the U.S. continues to adopt an arrogant and irrational approach towards Pakistan. For instance, they want to get the privileges of an Occupying power, which they are clearly not in Pakistan, and therefore get miffed if we enforce our security stringently. Given how Pakistani officialdom is strip searched sometimes by U.S. authorities at U.S. airports, and the problems Pakistanis are having getting U.S. visas, it hardly becomes the U.S. to complain if their 'diplomats' are subjected to minimal security searches or that U.S.

citizens are having to undergo normal reciprocal visa procedures. It is time Pakistani evolved greater clarity on its cooperation with the U.S., including on the issue of drones. Economic assistance cannot come at a political and strategic price that jeopardizes the country's security."

Editorial: Pak-U.S. Relations, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (01/10)

"The recent military operations against the Taliban have not only been strategically difficult but have also left a dent in the treasury. The delay in payments from the U.S. has affected the drive against terrorism and if not paid promptly, could make Pakistan lose the advantage over the Taliban that it has recently gained due to the military offensives. Pakistan is a frontline state and ally of the U.S. in the war on terror, yet the Americans have not fulfilled their part of the bargain. Though we consider it our war and not just the United States' war, its ramifications have been the most intense for Pakistan."

Editorial: U.S. Adamancy, an editorial in the Peshawar-based, independent regional daily "The Frontier Post" (cir. 7,000) (01/10)

"From the visiting U.S. Senators' public discourse, it is more than evident, if at all any evidence was needed, that Islamabad may protest and demand but American drone incursions in Pakistan will not cease. Nothing doing, was their curt bland reply to whoever Pakistani interlocutor raised this issue with them. For our own rulers' calculatedly ambiguous pronouncements on this score, a public impression has though gained wide currency domestically that these CIA drone incursions in fact carry our Islamabad top echelons' tacit acquiescence, an impression corroborated substantially no lesser by U.S. officials' leaks in their media and authoritative assertions to this effect pouring out from the U.S. Congress as well. But even if this isn't true, the hierarchy is living in a pipedream if Americans will ever listen to it, unless and until it asserts its sovereignty assertively and puts punch in its voice and act. The reason is simple. The Americans are stuck up miserably in Afghanistan like they were in Vietnam after their war there too went terribly awry."

Editorial: Costly Arms Sale, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/11)

"Foreign Minister Qureshi has made a dangerous statement that Pakistan would be supplying arms and ammunition to the Allied Forces in Afghanistan. This revelation was made at the joint press conference he had with British Foreign Secretary Miliband in Islamabad. It is not that the Pakistani arms industry should not get a sales boost, especially in terms of selling to NATO powers. But the sale seems to be restricted to Afghanistan which itself raises serious questions."

Editorial: Khost Bomber, an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/11)

"While the CIA's forward operating base in Khost was almost certainly being used to direct operations against the Haqqani network on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border.) So does the attack signal a new phase of heightened cooperation between the various militant groups straddling the Pak-Afghan border? We must recall that Waliur Rehman, a South Waziristan TTP kingpin, recently boasted that the TTP has sent "thousands" of its men to fight the American-led forces in Afghanistan - a claim that has largely been dismissed as propaganda, but which indicates the keenness of the TTP to drum up its role in Afghanistan."

Editorial: They Should Be Responded In The Same Coin, an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (01/11)

"In a meeting with U.S. Special Representative Richard Holbrooke the Pakistani Ambassador to the U.S. Hussein Haqqani expressed Pakistan's concern over additional screening of Pakistanis visiting America and demanded a review of the decision. According to him (Haqqani), what was the fault on the part of Pakistanis if a Nigerian tried to destroy an American plane?... In fact the issue of Nigerians is just an excuse as America and Britain had given

status of untouchables to visiting Pakistanis right after the 9/11. Even our ministers and high officials could not escape the humiliation.... The better course for Pakistan is that it should start shooting down American drones and subject all Americans and Britons coming to Pakistan to the same humiliating screening processes at the country's airports."

Editorial: Dialogue With Taliban Key to Peace In Afghanistan, an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (01/11)

"Taliban's relentless attacks on foreign forces in Afghanistan indicate that the U.S. troop surge will fail to achieve its intended objectives. In this scenario, it is high time for the U.S. and its allies to give up the idea of conquering Afghanistan by military means, and find out a peaceful solution of this issue. Taliban leader Mullah Omer holds the key to pacify Afghanistan, while Pakistan and other Muslim countries can also play a very important role in this regard."

Editorial: Dr. Khan On Energy Crisis, an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/11)

"We strongly believe that the country needs his services and expertise in the field of energy and one is confident that he would not fail us if given the task.... With his innovative ideas, command over technology and as a knowndoeer, he could certainly help the government to address the challenge of energy shortfall. There could be some objections by some foreign powers that do not want to see Pakistan to stand on its feet yet we have to keep the national interests upper most."

Editorial: Indian Presence a Threat to Peace in Afghanistan, an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (01/11)

"Owing to the sacrifices it had rendered in the war on terror and also due to its social, geographical and political proximity with Afghanistan, Islamabad was expecting that Washington would assign it a very important role in Kabul. But, paradoxically, the U.S. gave India a freehand to take a foothold in Afghanistan from where it could hatch conspiracies to destabilize Pakistan. The silence of the U.S., Britain and their allies is a clear manifestation of the fact that these powers are promoting their own interests in the garb of the war on terrorism."

Editorial: Pak-China Friendship, an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (01/11)

"The Deputy Chief of Staff of China's People's Liberation Army has said that all of Pakistan's defense requirements will be fulfilled and China will stand by Pakistan at all times.... Actually, India wants to extract aid from the world under the pretext of threat from Pakistan and China. By using China's name, it wants the major powers to provide it with heavy weapons so that it can fulfill its dream of becoming a regional superpower. We hope that the Chinese and Pakistani leaderships would take timely note of Indian designs and respond effectively."

Editorial: Peace efforts in Karachi, an editorial in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir 25, 000) (01/11)

"Keeping peace in Karachi is the responsibility of both the PPP and the MQM.... To normalize the situation, it is imperative upon all the political parties to cooperate with each other and maintain harmony. Only sincere, joint efforts can bring peace in the provincial capital."

Editorial: Not Terrorist Killings, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/11)

"The country is a tragic victim of terrorist acts that have assumed dangerous dimensions and spread like wildfire since the authorities initiated the ill-advised South Waziristan operation. The trouble in the sprawling metropolis is not new; it is home to various ethnic groups; the local Sindhis, the Memons, the Urdu speaking, the Pathans, the Punjabis and several others (including legal and

illegal immigrants), all of whom want to guard their turf. The impression that anyone is losing ground is likely to spark unrest. The government should form a commission, preferably judicial, to go into the causes of endemic trouble in the city and come up with a viable solution."

Opinion: The New Decade Of Doom, by Ghulam Asghar Khan in the Peshawar-based, independent regional daily "The Frontier Post" (cir. 7,000) (01/10)

"Bertrand Russell had said that human race might well become extinct before the end of the century. A philosophical prediction is not subject to the circumscriptions of time, but is invariably true. Earlier, in Sept. 1945 on Japan's surrender, U.S. Gen. Douglas Macarthur said in a radio broadcast: "A great victory has been won. A new era is upon us, we have had our last chance. If we do not devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door.... In 2010, the ugly apocalypse of Af-Pak war will bedevil, befuddle and consume the Obama White House that so unwisely and rashly ignored Gen. Douglas Macarthur's wise warning to avoid land wars in Asia."

Opinion: Patting Down Pakistanis, A Letter to the Editor by Ijaz Kumar in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/10)

"Air travel security is very important to me because my family and I travel to Pakistan, though not as often as we would like to. What struck me the most was the assertion that tighter security means that while the U.S. 'can trust the Pakistani military to fight a war for it, it cannot trust a Pakistani entering the country.' I do not see how the writer arrived at this conclusion. There is no denying the fact that profiling does not work in averting crimes. But in this war against terror security agencies have to focus on some countries more sharply than on others."

Opinion: National Solidarity Requirements, an op-ed by Ali Ashraf Khan in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/11)

"It should be clear by now that the alignment with the U.S. of this and the previous government is destroying this country and is mainly responsible for the worsening law and order situation and collapse of institutions. If we want to keep Pakistan intact and progressing we have to disengage from the so-called 'war on terror' of the U.S. and shun their advice to shift our forces from Eastern borders to Western borders.... It is indeed the need of the time that consensus is arrived on our national unity and solidarity requirements without looking towards foreign aid packages, which can be achieved without dividing the nation into different factions to play the game of musical chairs to benefit their foreign masters."

Opinion: How U.S., U.K. lost Iraq, Afghan War?, an op-ed by Dr. Mahboob a. Khawaja in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/11)

"America and Britain appear lost, not knowing how to come out of the self-engineered defeat in wars against Islam. Both superpowers are led by ignorant and arrogant elite not having any knowledge to fight the wars except thinking big and jumping here and there to demonstrate their material possessions and transitory power. They even do not know the enemy and do not have one, well defined in their plans to fight against.... American, British and Russian business establishments know well how to trade in global arms market. America and Britain lost the wars, the day they invaded Iraq and Afghanistan."

Opinion: Alice In Wonderland, an op-ed by Khalid Iqbal in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/11)

"Indeed it is time for a healing touch; time to calm anti-America sentiment through purpose-oriented talks. There is a need to reach out to the people of Afghanistan who hold the key to solution. Military ventures in Afghanistan and Iraq, have set the Americans on a collision course with the two communities viz Pashtuns and Shias. Anti-American sentiment is fast becoming a common relaying point for them. They have a culture to reach out to their perceived enemies



and settle their score.... President Obama needs to seize the opportunity and make a paradigm departure from the Bush script. However, time at his disposal is not unlimited; he is fast losing the once overwhelming goodwill that he enjoyed in this region. Well-wishers of America and this region hope that Obama does not lose the leverage and credibility in South Asia. He needs to revamp the script to emerge as an honest broker of peace in South Asia."

Opinion: Energizing The Peace Process, an op-ed by Talat Masood in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/11)

"The recent bold initiative of two leading media groups to launch a comprehensive drive at bringing peace between the two nuclear armed antagonists of South Asia should be welcomed as a positive development. It will be a Herculean undertaking considering the complex nature of India- Pakistan relations, but is undoubtedly worth the cause.... We tend to forget that India and Pakistan not only 'share boundaries but a shared civilization.' The urgent need of today is that they work together in facing the challenge of eliminating poverty and combating terrorism and place themselves to adjust to the forces of globalization and modernization. This is also the only way forward for creating an amiable environment for addressing Kashmir and other complex issues that have bedeviled their relationship."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)  
Patterson